W.I.T.C.H.

COVE[illegible] TEAMS

TH

SO, ARE WE *READY?*

ARE WE *SET?*

I THINK THE QUESTION WE HAVE TO *ASK* HERE, JACOB...

... IS WHETHER *VOID* IS *READY.*

AS I'LL *EVER* BE.

THEN LET'S GET THIS *ROLLING.* WE HAVE TO BE *UP* AND *ABLE* WHEN THE *WORD* COMES...

THE RUKENBROD COLLECTION

"...FROM GRIFTER."

I'M GOING THOUGH A "CRIMSON PERIOD," GUYS.

N'YOU'RE MY CANVAS.

PREPARE TO BE IMMORTALIZED!

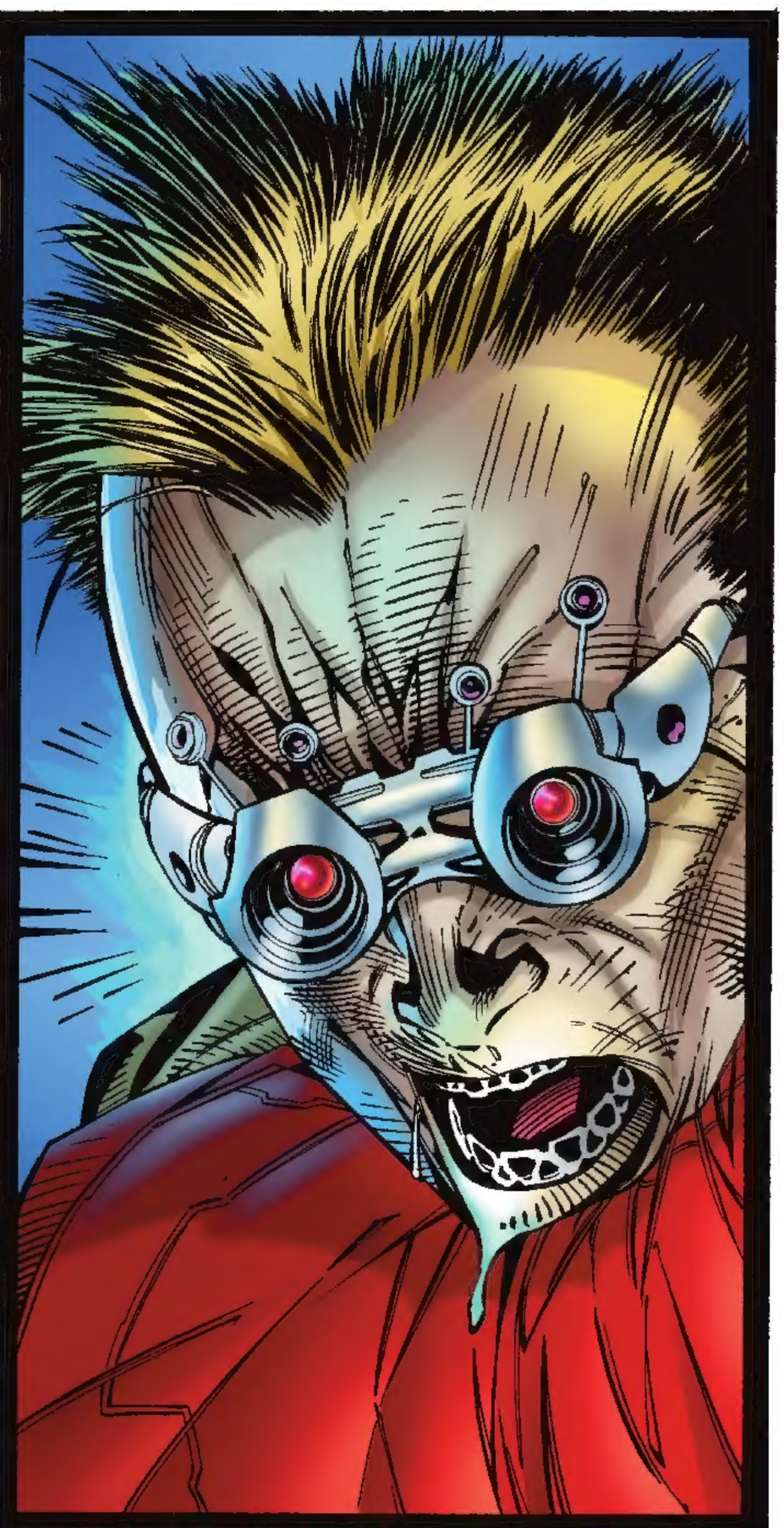
HEY BABY

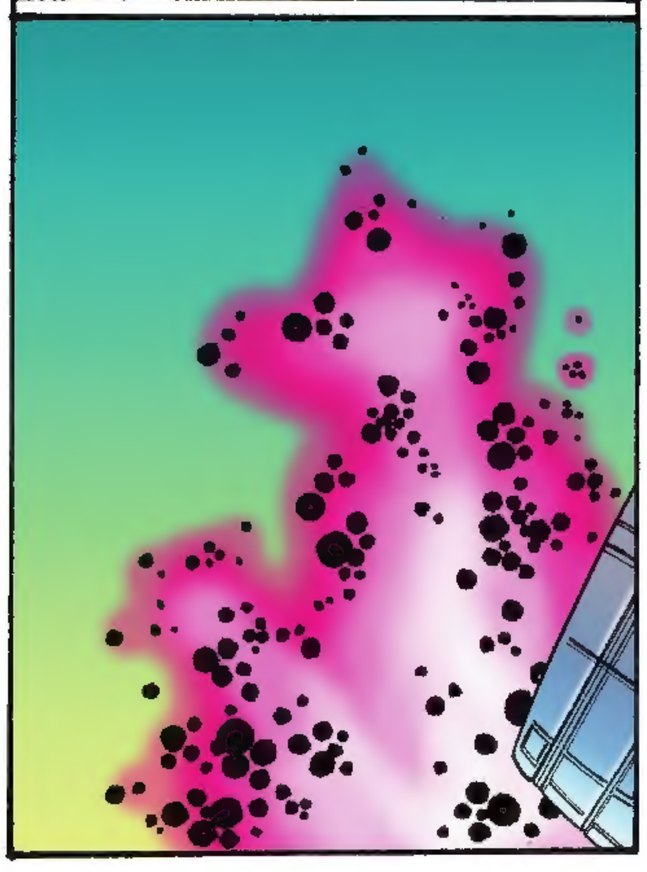
RUKENBROD

KILL HIM! BEFORE --

PHAM PHAM

PTANG





THESE ARE MY NOTES. THE OBSERVATIONS OF ADRIANNA TERESHKOVA. AT ONE TIME A COSMONAUT. AN EXPLORER OF THE BEYOND.

NOW, I EXPLORE WITHIN.

WITHIN THE COMPUTER. WALKING THE ELECTRONIC HIGHWAY. AND FROM THERE, INTO THE BRAIN OF PRISCILLA KITAEN. OR AN ELECTRONIC ENHANCEMENT OF IT, AT LEAST.

I AM NOT A PSYCHIATRIST. I DON'T KNOW THE TERMS OR THE ANSWERS FOR WHAT I SAW AND FOUND. THESE ARE MY OBSERVATIONS. NOTHING MORE. NO SOLUTIONS.

AND WHAT I SAW WERE CHAMBERS. VAST CHAMBERS FILLED WITH --

I SUPPOSE I SHOULD START A CHAMBER AT A TIME.

UPON ENTERING PRIS'S MIND I SAW A ROOM OF DANCERS. BALLERINAS. DANCERS FROM FILMS. AND GIRLS FROM CLUBS LIKE THE ONE PRIS WORKED AT WHEN THE WILDC.A.T.S FIRST MET HER.

THIS ROOM WAS BEAUTIFUL.

BUT PRIS WASN'T THERE.

SHE WAS IN THE ROOM *BEYOND.*

FIGHTING...

...ME AND MY *TEAMMATES.* EXCEPT IT *WASN'T* ME *OR* THEM.

RATHER, *MONSTROUS* MUTATIONS.

I *HAVE* TO ASK IF THAT'S *HOW* PRIS *SEES* US. REALLY. *WITHIN* HER *SUBCONSCIOUS.* AND *IF* SO, WHY *SPARTAN* FOUGHT ALONGSIDE HER AS THE *STERLING* SYNTHETIC *PROTECTOR.*

WHAT *IS* IT ABOUT *HADRIAN* THAT PRIS SEES *DIFFERENTLY?*

I *WATCHED* THE FIGHT, AND *HOW* HADRIAN AND PRIS *WEAVED* AND WORKED *WITH* EACH OTHER. THE PERFECT *COMPLEMENT* FOR EACH OTHER IN *COMBAT.* THIS IS *NOT* HOW THEY ARE IN *REALITY.* NOT QUITE. *NOR* HAS VOODOO *MASTERED* HER CODA TRAINING AS *WELL* IN REALITY AS SHE WIELDED IT *HERE.* NO. *BUT.*

BUT.

BUT *HERE* THEY RESEMBLED THE *DANCERS* IN THE CHAMBER *PRIOR.* THEIR MOVEMENTS *SO* IN SYNC THAT THE FIGHT SEEMED ALMOST *CHOREOGRAPHED.*

I JOINED THE FIGHT WHEN ***ONE*** OF THE WILDC.A.T.S SEEMED ABOUT TO ***STRIKE.*** FROM ***BEHIND.*** LIKE A ***COWARD.***

THAT WILDC.A.T WAS ***ME.***

I KILLED ***MYSELF.***

I AM ***NOT*** ONE FOR ***FIGHTING.*** NOT WHEN COLE AND RENO AND ZEALOT SEEM SO ***ADEPT*** AT IT, AND SO, ***SO*** VERY ***EAGER.*** BUT HERE THE NECESSITY ***AROSE.***

MY POWERS ARE ***STILL*** SOMETHING OF A ***MYSTERY*** TO ME. BUT I DO KNOW I CAN HURT WHEN I ***MUST.***

TODAY THAT ***"MUST"*** BECAME A ***"HAD TO."***

IT TOOK ***SEVERAL*** HOURS. IT TOOK THE ***KILLING*** OF ***EACH*** MUTATION ***SEVERAL*** TIMES, AS THEY AROSE AND AROSE ***REPEATEDLY*** BEFORE ***FINALLY*** STAYING DEAD.

AND WITH THE SALINE ***TANG*** OF THESE DOPPLEGANGERS' BLOOD RICH AND HEAVY ***IN*** MY ***NOSE,*** AND ***ON*** MY ***SKIN,*** AND ***ALL AROUND...***

...THE *THREE* OF US MOVED *ON.*

TO A MORE *FAMILIAR* FOE.

I USE THE TERM *"FOE"* IN THE COLLECTIVE *PLURAL.* THERE WERE *MORE* THAN *ONE.* MANY, MANY, *MANY* MORE.

DAEMONITES.

WE FOUGHT AND *FOUGHT ON.* ALL THE WHILE, WITH A *HORIZON* THAT SEEMED *MORE* LIKE THE FLICKERING GLASS PLATE OF A *GIGANTIC* HALOGEN *TELEVISION* SCREEN THAN *ANYTHING* REAL AND *TRUE.*

AND *ON* THIS SCREEN THE *DAYTIME* TURNED TO *DUSK.* AND WE FOUGHT *ON.* AND *THEN* THE *DAWN* APPEARED ALL PRIMETIME *LURID* SCARLET.

AND *STILL* WE *FOUGHT.*

WITH NO COMMERCIAL BREAKS.

BANG BANG BANG

I USE THE SHADOWS.

THOSE IN THE DARKNESS, SURE.

KRAKK

BUT ALSO THOSE IN THE HEARTS OF THE CABAL THAT I QUESTION.

THE DARKNESS THAT ANYONE WOULD HAVE IF THEY SIDED WITH ALIEN MONSTERS AGAINST THEIR OWN SWEET HUMAN RACE.

PHAM

PHAM PHAM

THESE SCUM ARE WALKING DEAD. FILLED WITH DREAD FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE. THEY KNOW WHAT THEY'VE DONE IS WRONG. I CAN SEE THAT IN THEIR EYES AND HEAR IT IN THEIR STAMMERS.

BUT THEY'RE AFRAID.

TRAITORS ARE USEFUL TO THOSE THEY'VE SIDED WITH.

A *REMORSEFUL* TRAITOR IS USELESS TO *NO ONE.*

MOST SEEM RELIEVED TO GIVE ME INFORMATION. I'M A *FATHER-CONFESSOR...*

...WITH A *GUN-BARREL* CONFESSIONAL AND A *FEARFUL* PENANCE.

SOME OF THESE WALKING DEAD I *END UP* MAKING SLIGHTLY *LESS* "PEDESTRIAN," SURE. THEY'RE *STUBBORN* OR *SILENT.*

BUT LIKE I *SAY.*

MOST SEEM *RELIEVED.*

RELIEVED TO *TALK.*

THE *NEXT* CHAMBER WAS A HUGE *BOOK* WITH PICTURES THAT *MOVED* AND *CHANGED*...

...AND TOLD THE *STORY* WHILE THE WORDS FLOWED IN TRAILS THAT ENTERED OUR HEADS *UNREAD* AND *UNBIDDEN*, YET UNDERSTOOD BY ALL OF US.

THIS CHAMBER WAS A *STORY*.

PEOPLE HAVE WRITTEN OF A *COLLECTIVE MEMORY*. SOMETHING WE HAVE FROM *BIRTH*, WHERE *KNOWLEDGE* OF EVENTS GONE ARE *SUBCONSCIOUSLY* LADEN *WITHIN* OUR MINDS AT THE TIME OF *CONCEPTION*.

ON THE *BASEST* LEVEL IT'S HOW ANIMALS *INSTINCTIVELY* KNOW THE *HABITS* OF THEIR SPECIES.

YET *MANY* HAVE THEORIZED THAT ON A *HIGHER* PLANE, AN *ANCESTOR'S* KNOWLEDGE MIGHT LIE *DORMANT* WITHIN THE BRAIN OF ONE BORN *CENTURIES* LATER.

AND *SO* IT APPEARS TO BE *HERE*.

AN INCIDENT THAT HAPPENED *LONG AGO*. *TWO CENTURIES BEFORE CHRIST*.

THE DAEMONITES NEEDED TO *REPRODUCE*. UNABLE TO ON THIS PLANET, THEY'D TRIED TO *SPLICE* THE BODY OF ONE OF THEIR RACE WITH THAT OF A *CAPTURED KHERUBIM*. THE END RESULT, THEY *HOPED*, WOULD BE *ABLE* TO *BREED*, AND BY THIS MEANS THE *DAEMONITE* RACE ON EARTH MIGHT *GROW*.

IT TOOK *MAGIC* AND *MIRACLES* AND THE LIVES OF *TWENTY THOUSAND MORTAL SOULS*, WHOSE ESSENCES *FUELED* THE FIRE OF THIS TERRIBLE *RITE*. BUT ON THE *FIFTEENTH DAY*, THE CREATION WAS FINALLY *REALIZED*.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR THOSE THAT *MADE* HIM, THE HYBRID HAD THE *KHERUBIM'S THOUGHTS*. HE FOUGHT AND ESCAPED. HE WENT *BACK* TO HIS *OWN KIND*.

AND IN THE TIME *SINCE*, THE DAEMONITE GENE HAD ALL BUT *GONE* FROM THE GENE STRAIN OF HIS *DESCENDANTS*. FOR WITHIN THEM, THE *POWERS* THAT MADE A *GIFTED ONE* WERE SLIGHT.

UNTIL A BIRTH, IN RECENT TIMES. A *GIRL*. BORN IN LOUISIANA. A *MOST GIFTED* OF GIFTED ONES.

PRIS HEARD ALL THIS. LEARNED IT. NOT ONCE DID SHE REGISTER SHOCK OR SHAME OR FEAR *ABOUT* HERSELF OR *FOR* HERSELF.

"I MUST GO ON, TO THE FINAL CHAMBER," WAS ALL SHE SAID WITH A SAD, COOL CALM. *"I AM THERE, BEYOND, AND I MUST MEET* MYSELF... MY *TRUE* SELF."

I DON'T KNOW ***WHAT*** PRISCILLA FOUND WITHIN THE ***FINAL*** CHAMBER.

I CAN ***ONLY*** GUESS.

WHAT I ***WILL*** SAY IS THAT EVERYTHING I'VE SEEN HAS RAISED ***QUESTIONS*** -- ONES THAT MAY REQUIRE ***ANSWERS*** AT ***SOME*** POINT HENCE.

IF PRIS IS INDEED A ***HYBRID*** OF KHERUBIM AND DAEMONITE, IS THAT THE ANSWER TO THE ***TRANSFORMATIONS*** WE'VE WITNESSED FROM HER ON OCCASION?

AND ***HOW*** MIGHT THAT DAEMONITE STRAIN ***WITHIN*** HER ***MANIFEST*** ITSELF IN THE ***FUTURE?*** AND FOR ***GOOD?*** OR ***BAD?***

WHY DID SHE SEE HER TEAMMATES AS THE ***ENEMY?*** IS IT A FEAR OF ***WHAT*** WE ***ALL*** ARE? HER SELF-LOATHING... THAT SHE ***IS*** AS WE ***ALL*** ARE?

AND HER ***FEELINGS*** FOR ***HADRIAN?*** DOES THAT STEM FROM THE ***FACT*** THAT HE IS ***NOT*** OF ***FLESH?*** HE'S PRISTINE, ***MECHANICAL*** PERFECTION. FLAWLESS. IS ***THAT*** IT?

OR IS THERE SOMETHING ***MORE?***

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED.

WHEN PRISCILLA DEFEATS ***WHATEVER*** IS WITHIN THAT ***FINAL*** ROOM OF HER ***SUBCONSCIOUS.***

WHEN WHATEVER TERRIFYING ***MIRROR SELF*** SHE'S FIGHTING IN THERE...

...IS FINALLY BEATEN.

IT OCCURS TO ME. THE ANSWER. ***HOW*** TO ***FIND*** HIGHTOWER.

NO ONE KNEW ***ENOUGH*** TO HELP. NOT ***OUTRIGHT.***

BUT THEY'D ***ALL*** HEARD WHERE HIGHTOWER HAD ***STAYED.*** RECENTLY, BUT IN THE ***PAST.***

HED BEEN ***TRAVELING.*** PREPARING FOR ***SOMETHING,*** BUT MOBILE ***ALL*** THE ***WHILE.***

HOTELS, CAR RENTALS, PLANE FLIGHTS...

NOT TO MENTION MEALS AND THE PURCHASING OF A CLEAN PAIR OF JOCKEYS.

THEY ***ALL*** REQUIRED ***ONE*** THING.

A ***CREDIT CARD.***

ONE CABAL KNEW HIGHTOWER'S CURRENT ***ALIAS.*** I NEEDED ***THAT*** FOR SURE.

AND THEN THE ***ONLY*** OTHER THING...

...IS A ***COMPUTER*** CONSOLE. A ***MODEM.***

AND ***FIVE MINUTES PEACE.***

YEAH. I *FOUND* HIGHTOWER.

FOLLOWED THE *TRAIL* OF HIS *PLATINUM AMEX.*

YEAH, *EASY.* I STILL *BRUISED* MY KNUCKLES ALONG THE *WAY,* THOUGH.

I'M IN *WASHINGTON, D.C,* YEAH. THERE'S A CODA BASE HERE. HE'S *MEETING* WITH THEM. WHY? *YOU* TELL *ME* WHY.

YOU *WANT* THAT I --

NO? 'KAY, I'LL *WAIT* FOR *YOU.*

WE'LL *BE* THERE *SOON,* COLE.

AND... *ERR...*

...YOU DID *GOOD.*

CODA *AND* HIGHTOWER, 'C.A.T.S.

WE HAVE *GOT* OURSELVES *QUITE* A *FIGHT.*

SAVANT IN

"Wedding Day Jitters"

By

James Robinson

Terry Dodson

Karl Story &

Jason Martin

WHEN YOUR LIFE IS A PERPETUAL **CLIFF-HANGER**, THERE ARE **NO** BEGINNINGS, **NO** ENDINGS.

JUST A **CONSTANT** STATE OF **PERIL**. ONE ADVENTURE **BEGINS** BEFORE THE **LAST** HAS EVEN **ENDED**. THE DANGERS **BLEED** INTO **EACH OTHER**.

SO FOR **ALL** OF YOU READING **THIS**, NO, IT **ISN'T** THE BEGINNING OF **SAVANT'S** TALE.

BUT IT'S AS GOOD AS IT'S GOING TO GET.

THE **QUEST** FOR THE HEAD OF **SOLOMON** (AND THE JEWEL OF MAJESTY THAT ANCIENT PRIESTS INLAID INTO THE DEAD KING'S SKULL) HAS TAKEN SAVANT FROM **AFRICA**...

...TO AUSTRALIA...

...TO ICELAND...

...TO DETROIT...

...AND **FINALLY** TO ONE OF THE **REMOTE** AND PRIMITIVE **ISLANDS** THAT DOT THE SOUTH PACIFIC (WITH THE HELP OF **MABEL BLIGH**, YOUNG WOULD-BE **AVIATRIX** AND, ACCORDING TO HER, AT LEAST, THE **REINCARNATION** OF LEGENDARY FEMALE BARN-STORMER **PANCHO BARNES**).

SOME OF THESE ISLANDS HAVE **NEVER** SEEN A **CIVILIZED** FACE.

THIS IS **ONE** OF THEM.

SOLOMON'S SKULL WAS **AMONG** THE **TREASURES** OF THE ISLAND'S RULER, **KING LOOOOTH**. TO ACQUIRE IT, SAVANT AGREED TO BE LOOOOTH'S **QUEEN**. FOR THE **HOUR** IT WOULD TAKE TO **KNOCK** THE KING OUT AND **ESCAPE** WITH THE SKULL, OR SO SHE **THOUGHT**.

UNFORTUNATELY...

...WITH KING LOOOOTH **AWAY**, SAVANT HAD NO WAY OF **KNOWING**...

...THAT TO BECOME QUEEN REQUIRED A SPECIAL KIND OF CEREMONY...

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

...OR THAT LOOOOTH WAS A SPECIAL KIND OF KING.

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

LOOOOTH

KRAK

WHAP

SORRY, BOYS. CALL IT WEDDING DAY *JITTERS*. CALL ME A *BLUSHING* BRIDE.

BUT *NO WAY* ARE ME AND HANDSOME GOING ON A HONEYMOON *THIS* MILLENNIUM.

POWW

BUT *SOLLY* I'M TAKING. THE PRICE I CHARGE FOR YOU MAKING ME WEAR THIS *LUDICROUS* OUTFIT.

AND MY BAG OF TRICKS. I'M NOT LEAVING *THAT*.

THK

WHOOPS. HERE COMES *HUBBY*. GOTTA LOVE YOU AND LEAVE YOU.

LOOOOTH GAINS YARD BY MINUTE.

THINK OUT-RUNNING AN *APE GOD* IS *EASY?* YOU TRY IT.

IN *BARE FEET* NO LESS.

BUT JUST WHEN THINGS LOOK BAD...

GEE, THINGS LOOK *BAD.*

WAIT! THAT *SOUND!* A PLANE'S *ENGINE!*

...HEEERE'S MABEL. REMEMBER HER? THE REINCARNATION OF PANCHO BARNES. WHATTA PILOT! WHATTA CUTIE!

HAVE TO GET *UP* TO MABE. INTO THE *AIR.*

GIVES ME AN *IDEA.*

A WAY TO *COOL* LOOOOTH'S ARDOR AT THE *SAME* TIME.

WHOAAA!

KAZOOM!

SORRY HUBBY, *THIS* MIGHT NOT BE *YOUR* IDEA OF WEDDING DAY *PHYSICAL CONTACT...*

BUT IT'S AS *GOOD* AS YOU'RE GONNA *GET.*

WHAKK

OOP

...AAANNNNDD...

GOTCHA!

NOW I JUST *HOPE* MABE CAN --

M'COMING...

COMING...

COMING...

SO *WHAT* KEPT YOU?

FIRST I RAN OUT OF *FUEL.*

THEN THERE WAS THE PTERODACTYL.

THEN THE *SHEIK'S* MEN WITH *LASER* RIFLES.

AND *THEN* I HAD A TEETH CLEANING APPOINTMENT.

HOURS LATER...

UH OH.

UH OH? *WHAT* OH?

THE *CONTROLS.* THEY'RE STARTING TO ACT *UP. NOT RIGHT.*

JUST LIKE YOU, TOO, TO FLY WITHOUT *CHECKING* THE STATE OF YOUR PLANE *FIRST.*

HEY, GET *OFF* MY CASE, WILL YA? I CHE--

NO! THERE'S OUR PROBLEM! ON THE *WING.* IT'S THE DREAD OF *EVERY* PILOT FLYING.

WHAT, A DRUG AND ALCOHOL TEST?

EVEN *WORSE...*

...A GREMLIN!

AND SO IT GOES...

...WHEN YOUR LIFE IS A **PERPETUAL** CLIFF-HANGER. NO BEGINNINGS. NO ENDINGS.

JUST A **CONSTANT** STATE OF **PERIL.**

TO BE CONTINUED!

WildC.A.T.s®
Covert-Action-Teams #18

"HARD HUNT"

STORY
James Robinson

PENCILS
Travis Charest

INKS
Troy Hubbs

INK ASSIST
Kirk Rukenbrod

Savant in "Wedding Day Jitters"

COLORS: Joe Chiodo

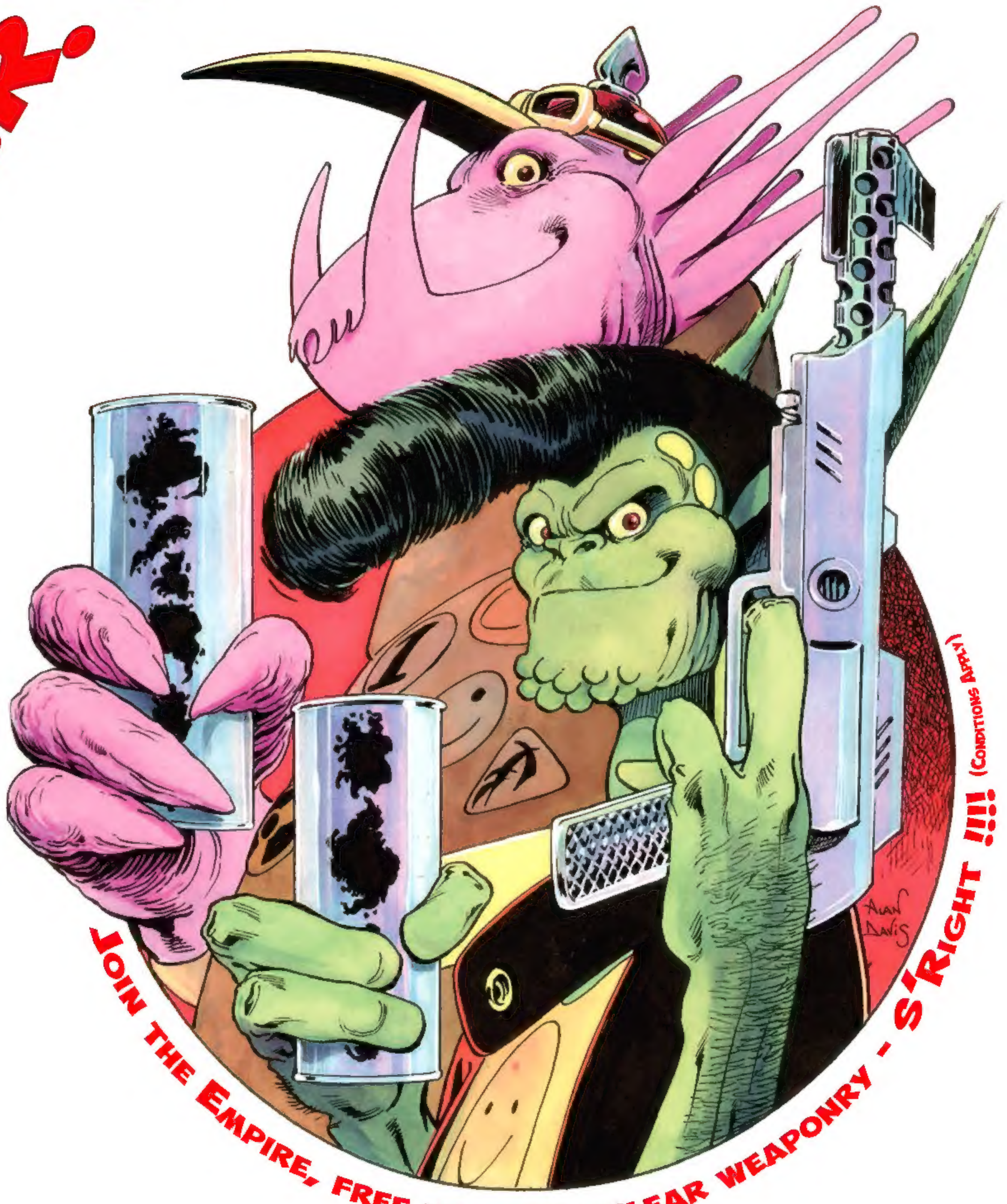
COLOR ASSIST: Martin Jimenez

WildC.A.T.s created by Jim Lee and Brandon Choi

Cover by Travis Charest and Troy Hubbs

Pinup by Jeff Rebner and John Dell

D.R. & QUINCH



JOIN THE EMPIRE, FREE THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONRY - S'RIGHT !!!! (CONDITIONS APPLY)

K6 NW